



MURRAY TATE
UNIVERSITY

CAREER SERVICES HANDBOOK

■ RESUME AND COVER LETTER WRITING TIPS

MURRAY STATE CAREER SERVICES

100 OAKLEY APPLIED SCIENCE BUILDING | 270-809-3735 | MURRAYSTATE.EDU/CAREER

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CAREER SERVICES provides resources and assistance in all aspects of the career development and job search processes. Current students, faculty, alumni, parents, University employees and local, regional and international employers are invited to utilize our services.

This Career Handbook is just one resource available to help you successfully navigate the job search process. Make sure you also meet with us one-on-one and take advantage of our website and Handshake. Handshake is our online job platform for students and alumni.

The mission of Career Services is to support the institution's purpose of educating individuals to become productive citizens in society by serving as a liaison between students, alumni, faculty and the world of work. We commit to providing meaningful career counseling as well as up-to-date job search coaching, résumé and cover letter writing strategies and hiring trends resources.

We also strive to encourage and connect students to experiential learning opportunities. Internships and on and off-campus part-time job opportunities are made available via our website. Career events bring employers to campus for networking purposes as well. The National Student Exchange program, coordinated through our office, allows students to attend another college or university for up to one year.



Career Services

100 Oakley Applied Science Bldg., Murray, KY 42071
P: 270-809-3735 | msu.careerservices@murraystate.edu

CAREER COUNSELING

- Career counseling
- What can I do with a major in ...?
- FOCUS 2 career assessment

CAREER COACHING, RESUMÉ, COVER LETTER, AND NETWORKING STRATEGIES

- Career coaching
- Résumé/cover letter critiques
- Mock interviews
- Networking/branding strategies

WEBSITE RESOURCES AND ADVISING

- Website resources
- Advising

HANDSHAKE AND JOB POSTINGS

- Handshake
- Full-time job postings
- Part-time job postings
- On-campus interviews
- Career events
- Special populations job search strategies

NATIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE, INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES, AND CANDID CAREERS

- National Student Exchange
- Internship opportunities
- Candid Careers

CAREER SERVICES OVERVIEW, DINING AND BUSINESS ETIQUETTE, HOW TO CHOOSE A MAJOR, INTERVIEW STRATEGIES, JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES, NETWORKING STRATEGIES, PROFESSIONAL BRAND AND LINKEDIN DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES, RESUMÉ AND COVER LETTER WRITING, AND SALARY NEGOTIATIONS

- Career Services Overview
- Dining and Business Etiquette
- How to Choose a Major
- Interview Strategies
- Job Search Strategies
- Networking Strategies
- Professional Brand and LinkedIn Development Strategies
- Résumé and Cover Letter Writing
- Salary Negotiations



In the job search, first self-assess, identify and evaluate your interests, skills, values, goals and personality traits; think about what type of work environment is a good fit for you; and research the job market in the geographic locations you are considering. Then, reflect on your education and experiences to prepare to communicate what you learned and what successes you achieved to a potential employer. Finally, evaluate your “worth” using salary calculators and cost of living comparisons. To get started, use the following exercises to update your résumé/cover letter and prepare for interviews.

ANALYTICAL

- £ analyzed
- £ assessed
- £ compared
- £ conceptualized
- £ critiqued
- £ diagnosed
- £ evaluated
- £ identified
- £ inspected
- £ interpreted data
- £ investigated
- £ made decisions
- £ observed
- £ predicted
- £ projected
- £ proved
- £ reflected
- £ researched
- £ reviewed
- £ solved problems
- £ surveyed
- £ tested
- £ thought critically
- £ validated

£ defined

- £ described
- £ drafted
- £ edited
- £ explained
- £ foreign language
- £ interacted
- £ interviewed
- £ listened
- £ presented
- £ published
- £ reported
- £ spoke in public
- £ summarized
- £ wrote

FINANCIAL

- £ appraised
- £ audited
- £ balanced
- £ budgeted
- £ earned
- £ invested
- £ merchandised
- £ raised funds73

£ wrote [g0W1g0EgRR87C2bTfR0#8g2](#)

CREATIVE

- £ advertised
- £ created
- £ designed
- £ developed
- £ displayed
- £ entertained
- £ illustrated
- £ improvised
- £ innovated

COMMUNICATION

- £ communicated
- £ debated
- £ performer
- £ produced
- £ promoted



- £ accommodating
- £ accurate
- £ adaptable
- £ adventurous
- £ ambitious
- £ analytical
- £ appreciate

Employer Hiring Process

Organizations go through a purposeful hiring process. They first identify a need and develop a job description. The description is posted through various outlets including company website, job boards, social media, etc. Applications are reviewed and many utilize phone or Skype interviews as the first round interview followed by an on-site interview. Finally, a job offer is made to the preferred candidate. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers 2013 Recruiting Benchmarks Survey, here are some typical interview-to-offer time lines:

Your Job Search Process

The average job search can take six to nine months. Pursue it purposefully to help with efficiency. Avoid comparing yourself to peers and maintain a positive attitude. Throughout the

first round interview followed by an on-site interview. Finally, a job offer is made to the preferred candidate. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers 2013 Recruiting Benchmarks Survey, here are some typical interview-to-offer time lines:

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Types of Résumés

Chronological (Traditional)

Use when experience, education and activities are strong and relevant to your objective; previous job titles or company names sound impressive; job history shows growth or emphasizes related accomplishments. Warning: It makes non-impressive job titles and frequent career changes clearly visible.

Functional / Skills-Based (Alternative)

Use to deemphasize irrelevant job titles and work history in order to draw attention to transferable skills. Draw on all sources of experience (jobs, volunteering, activities and



SUMMARY/HIGHLIGHTS OF QUALIFICATIONS

Summarize in - bullets, the skills and personal traits you possess and that mirror the job description to best communicate area fit for the position/company. An objective is NOT recommended as it is outdated. However, if specifically requested, state specific job title seeking skills offered.

EDUCATION

University; City, ST | Degree, Major; Date of Graduation

- GPA: . Overall GPA is assumed
- Add Major GPA if higher and label as such

APPLICABLE COURSEWORK (Optional Section)

Only list courses that fill a gap in résumé or otherwise illustrate acquired knowledge that has not been demonstrated through your experience section - if listing more than three, use columns

EXPERIENCE

Employer; City, ST | Job Title; Dates of Employment

- List experiences present to past
 - Include applicable volunteer experiences, internships, co-ops, part and full time
- Knowledge and

CHRONOLOGICAL RÉSUMÉ

College Street | Murray, KY
chronological@murraystate.edu | - - | linkedin.com/in/chronorésumé

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Energetic college graduate seeking Public Relations Assistant Director position
- Innovative thinker with strong creative problem solving and analytical skills
- Strong communicator (verbal and written), experienced in technical writing, blogging and presenting
- Technologically savvy, proficient in using social media marketing strategies

EDUCATION

Murray State University (MSU); Murray, KY | BA, Public Relations; May 20XX
 • GPA: . / .

EXPERIENCE

MSU Career Services; Murray, KY | Social Media Intern; January XX - Present
 • Create and schedule Facebook, Twitter and Instagram posts, increasing links back to website %
 • Collaborate with supervisor to develop Facebook ad
 • Develop social media standards for organization

Social Sorority; Murray, KY | President; March XX - Present
 • Direct -member executive council to achieve chapter/national goals
 • Assess ideas and make recommendations for implementation
 • Served as liaison to -member organization and national organization

VP of Marketing; March XX - February XX
 • Created, implemented and maintained social media and website

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- Focusing on whole story instead of relevant part
- Using qualifiers: “I feel” / “I believe”
- Not sharing follow-up plan
- Starting every sentence with “I” or “my.”

The reader should reach the end of your letter thinking, “This

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY STYLE LETTER
1234 Racer Rd | Murray, KY 42071
270.123.1234 | summary@murraystate.edu

January 24, 20xx

Mr. U. R. Employer
Director, Personnel Department
We Are Successful
123 12th Street
Murray, KY 42071

Dear Mr. Employer:

I am writing to apply for the Public Relations Coordinator position posted on the wearesuccessfuljobs.com site. Not only do I have a degree in public relations from Murray State University, but I have two years of experience using social media for outreach purposes. In addition, I demonstrate the required and desired qualifications in the following ways:

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will contact you next week to confirm receipt of my application and discuss the possibility of meeting.

Sincerely,

Executive Summary Letter

Design header like résumé or follow business letter format, typing name and address in block format



“You never get a second chance to make a first impression.” You do not need a lot of clothes for interviews, but what you have should be of good quality, fit properly, and be clean, ironed and reflective of current business styles.

Business Professional attire is expected at Career Services Events (Career Expo, Teacher Career Fair) and is expected in many work environments.

Acceptable Business Casual attire varies greatly. Research the organization’s environment and dress for the job you want, not the one you have. Remember that Business Casual is often different from Casual and Trendy.

Men

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

- Select a high quality, dark tone suit to communicate respect, experience and professionalism.
- Select white or blue cotton shirts; avoid bright colors or stripes.
- Select subdued, traditional tie.
- Match belt and shoe color.
- Shine your black or cordovan shoes. Wear dark, mid-calf socks.
- Wear conservative watch, avoid earrings and other jewelry.
- Button an American-cut blazer/ jacket when you stand.

BUSINESS CASUAL

- Shave and have well-groomed, professional-looking hair.
- Wear long-sleeved or short-sleeved (in summer) shirts.
- Iron and wear slacks or khakis.
- Wear leather shoes (no sandals, athletic shoes or boots) with matching mid-calf socks.
- Tie is generally not needed, but if in doubt, wear one.
- Match belt with shoe color.
- Avoid earrings/jewelry.

Women

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

- Wear a conservative tailored suit or dress suit.
- Blouse should be frill-less and white or cream.
- Skirt should hit top of knee; avoid extreme slits.
- Wear shined basic medium/low- heeled pumps.
- Limit jewelry and select subtle options.
- Choose small handbag or portfolio.
- Nails: Conservative length and polish

BUSINESS CASUAL

- If it’s something you wear “out,” you probably shouldn’t wear it.
- Choose casual pants or skirts that aren’t too tight.
- Choose skirts that come to the knee while standing and cover your thighs when seated.
- Top: shirts, blouses, sweaters and sweater sets that are not tight and do not reveal cleavage.

Everyone

- Bring a folder/portfolio to hold résumé copies and a pen.
- Have well groomed hair and beard (if applicable)
- Have clean, manicured fingernails.
- Don’t wear cologne/perfume.
- Wear shoes that are well maintained.
- Iron/press your clothing.
- Look at yourself: Hair neat? Shirt tucked? Tie is knotted properly? etc.
- Dress for the job you want, not the one you have!

These are never appropriate:

- T-shirts
- Shorts/jeans/short skirts
- Flip-flops
- Tight or baggy fits
- Excessive perfume or cologne
- Missing buttons, tears or rips.

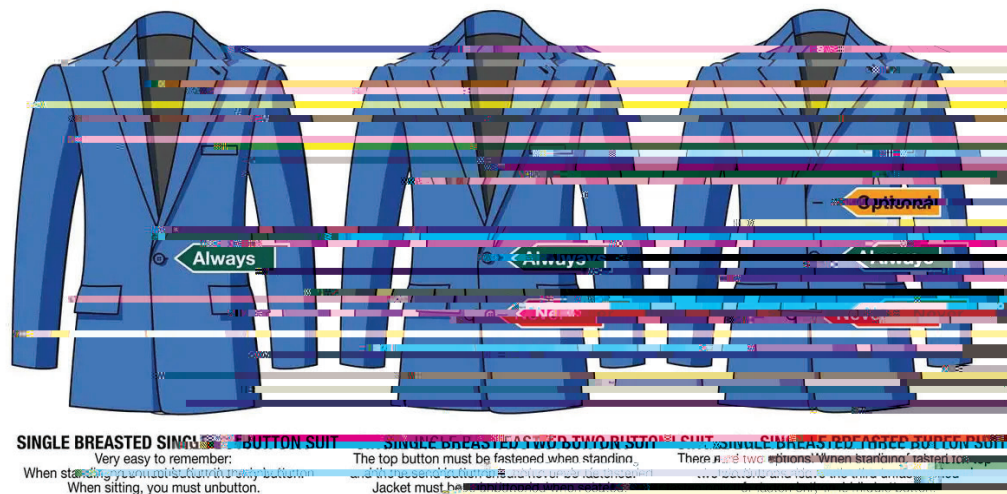
Know Your Value/Research

Most entry-level candidates do not have much clout in salary negotiations, as many entry-level jobs have fixed, non-negotiable starting salaries. However, you will not get more unless you ask. Your ability to negotiate within the set range depends on your qualifications and information gathered through research. There is no substitute for knowing the facts and using them to your benefit. Understand your bargaining power: assess your worth, identify special skills, recognize what you bring to the relationship and analyze the competition.

- Evaluate realistic personal salary requirements. How much do you need to earn to “live”?
- Find out what your skills and level of experience are worth in the job market (i.e. internships, co-ops, volunteer and part-time work, education level, etc.). Speak to a career counselor regarding your experience level and estimated market averages based on experience.
- Research career fields and salary averages for various occupations. Review web resources such as the Occupational Outlook Handbook and NACE salary survey.
- Investigate cost of living adjustments to salary based on employment location: salary.com, homefair.com, usacitylink.com.
- Develop a salary range (not too broad) with a high, low and middle range.
- Examine company’s hiring history. Conduct informational interviews or utilize your network to gather information. Many companies’ websites list their job postings and may list salary ranges and job descriptions.

Know When to Negotiate

Ideally, the best time to negotiate is after an offer is made by the employer. Discussing salary before an offer is made may hurt your chances of getting the job. Research shows that 80% of job offers are made without any negotiation. If you do negotiate, do it after you have received an offer. Research shows that 15% of job offers are made with negotiation. If you do negotiate, do it after you have received an offer.





Budgeting

Before you start spending, create a budget and establish an emergency savings account of at least one month's salary. Then create a line in your budget for the "toys" you've been dreaming of owning, and do not buy them on credit. Ultimately, you should have an emergency savings account equal to three months' income.

If you feel that you can't afford to save \$1000, get a second job or sell stuff you don't need. Establish an emergency savings account and then start saving for retirement.

When developing your budget, note where you spent money over two months to create a more accurate budget, and then in the third month budget every dollar (to zero) so you know where all of your money went at the end of the month. Don't forget to budget for unexpected expenses. See the sample budget to the right for suggested categories.

Completing Tax Forms

Review rules and regulations at [irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov)

Do I need new clothes?

Not everyone will need a new wardrobe, but clubbing clothes don't translate to world of work clothes. Also, companies/ organizations define business professional and business casual very differently, so do your research or ask. The following tend to be universally accepted:

- Iron your clothes. Wrinkled clothing implies that you don't care about details or your own appearance, and others may think you will approach work the same way.
- Shine your shoes and get rid of or repair shoes with worn soles.
- Do not wear flip flops.
- Avoid noisy jewelry that may cause you to be distracted.



There are different rules to follow during this “breaking-in stage.” Take time to figure out how to “establish yourself, learn the way ‘things are done’ and figure out what you need to do to earn credibility and respect.” Learn the culture and the unspoken rules of the organization. Keep your eyes and ears open and your mouth shut until you understand the company. It is only then that your ideas will have true impact and respect.

- Be the first one to the office.
- Avoid office politics and gossiping. (If people are willing to gossip with someone they barely know, who are they telling about the conversation with you?)
- Gracefully mourn the loss of spring break. Don’t look shocked when they tell you there is no built in week-off and do not whine about it!
- Continue to meet new people, have more experiences and challenge yourself intellectually, spiritually and emotionally.
- Give back to your community and volunteer your time to serve others.
- Take classes in areas of interest or pursue another degree to exercise your mind.
- Challenge yourself to experience other cultures so you learn how the world is bigger than you realized.

Tips to First-Year Success

- 1) Adopt the right attitudes.
- 2) Adjust your expectations.
- 3) Master breaking-in skills.
- 4) Manage the impressions you make.
- 5) Build effective relationships.
- 6) Become a good follower.
- 7) Understand organization’s culture.
- 8) Develop organizational savvy.
- 9) Understand your new-hire role.
- 10) Develop work savvy.
- 11) Master the tasks of your job.
- 12) Acquire knowledge, skills and abilities you need.

Resource: Job Choices 2006, NACE
Solomon, G. “The Job Search Organizer and National Business Employment Weekly.” Fall 1990, pp. 28 -29
Opsata, M. “Should You Take That Job?” January 1992, pp. 27-28
Block, B. “Once You Receive A Job Offer It’s Time to Talk Money...Salary Negotiation,”
EEO Bimonthly Bloom, B. “Fast Track to the Best Job.” Knock ‘Em Dead. 1993, pp.
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